

**A<sup>d</sup> TREATISE,**  
**HOW BY THE WORDE OF**  
**God, Christian mens Almose ought to**  
**Be distributed.**

**Math. VI.**

**W**Hen thou geuest thyne Almose, let not  
the Trompettes be blowne before the : as  
Hypochrites do in their Sinagoges,  
and Streates, to haue Praise  
of Men.

C 1012: 58

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## To the Reader

**B**Ecause in these days, lyke as not manie  
yeres sithc, manie lustie and sturdie perso-  
nes be suffred to begge, men counterfaiuinge hor-  
rible deseases and infirmities, fitte by the common  
ways crauinge Almoſe: dyuerſe go about West-  
münſter Hauſe, and other places, with glones, un-  
der pretence to gather for the mariage of poore  
Maidens, but in deede to haue wherewith to  
coople with Harlottes, or to riotte at Dice: And  
ſome craftie Hypocrites, no Friers in coates, but  
more subtil the Friers in maners, under colour to  
relieue and mayntain Orphanes, poore wydowes,  
poore Scolers, and other, gather muche, but put all  
into their owne purses, or bestowe litle, and that  
after their owne Fantasie, and not indifferenlie  
to euerye one as his neade requyreth, and Goddes  
worde prescribeth, And so by all these meanes,  
and manie other, good mens charities be utterlie  
abused: I thought it uery necessarie, to set forth  
in Engliſhe the mynde and opinion of the Reue-  
rende Father, and Excellent clerke Maſter Mar-  
tyne Bucer, touchinge the right geuinge and di-  
ſtribution of Almoſe, and prouiſion for the poore,  
declared in his booke entituled De regno Chri-  
ſti, made for the Moſte Blisseſed King Ed-  
warde: whiche, if good people will ſolowe, no

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doubt but all these Eynde off subtile beaues shal  
bee forced to gyue ouer their occupation, And  
Hypochrisie it self will schortlie lose one of the  
principall fethers of hir winge. And if thei will  
not, let them take heede, that whilest thei goo  
about with their painted Charitie to get A litle  
uayn glorie, thei purchase them selfs at length,  
by mayntenance the Lewde, cuerlastinge dam-  
nation. But I haue A good hope, that manie erre  
by ignorance, who beinge rightlie instructed,  
will shewe them selfs conformable to Gods  
des will, and do as he comaundethe;  
wherbye thei may fynde at  
length his mercifull  
fauor.

Fare well.



THE ORDER OFF THE  
prouision for the poore.



ALMYGTIE God that setteth up the Humble, and pulleth downe the Proude, that gyueth riches, and taketh it away, plainly commaundeth his people, that thei shulde not suffer any to lacke emonge them: Whiche commaundement the primatyue Church of Christe at Hierusalem kept with all reuerence and deuotion: wherbie there was suche aboundaunce of Almes geuen by Good men, as relieved euerymans necessitie, and so emonge them there was not one, that was not provided for. Afterwarde, that this prouision and gatheringe for the poore might be the better lofed unto, and contynew, the Apostelles inspired with the hollic goste, by cōsent of the hole cōgregation, appoynted to that Ministerie seuen Men of honest repute and fame, full of the hollic goste, and wisdom, on whom thei layde their handes, for a signe of their admissiō. And so this ordenaunce and prouision for the poore was uery deuoutlie obserued, till Antichrist with his fluddes of wickednes, ouerflowed the Church of Christ. Those that were called to that hollic ministerie, were named the Deacons of the Church: who albeit thei ought to be assistant to the Elders of the

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Congregation, in the conseruation and execution of the Discipline of Christe, and the Administration of the Sacramentes: yet their chief Office and duetie was, to keepe the names of the poore in the Congregation of the Christians, to knowe euerye mans lif, and behauiour, And of the comen Almoſe of the faithfull, to distribute to euerye one, as muche as was sufficient for his necessarie relieffe. For those that may gette their lyuinge by their labour and trauayl, and wil not, ought to be put out of the Church: He that dothe not labour, let him not eate, saith the Apostell. Sith then it is the cōmaundement of god, to relieue the poore and needie, and to see that none lacke: all suche as mynde fullie to receaue the Kingdom of Christe, ought to labour earnestlie, that this ordenaunce be restored in to Christes Church. For those that haue the goodes of the worlde and see their Brethern lacke, and haue not compassion on them: the loue of good dothe not dwell in them, and so also neither the Kingdom of Christe is in them.

And all those that heare Christe, and the hollic goste, wil indeuour and labour to ordayne and do all good thinges in suche order and manner, as thei knowe the lorde, and the hollic goste hath appointed.

And sith it is manifest, that god earnestlie forbiddeth

badde, that his people shoulde suffer eny to beg  
emōge them, and that his goodnes also ordeyned,  
that the poore shoulde be loſed unto by certayn  
choſen men in the Church, and that good mens  
deuotions shoulde be distributed to euerye nedie  
perſone, as his neceſſitie requireth: it is with out  
all doubt, that all thoſe pray with out deuotion.  
**L**et thy Kyngdom come, which to their  
power, do not beſtowe all their endouour, that  
this maner of prouidinge for the poore, be reſto-  
red in to the Church, whiche the lorde him ſelf  
commaunded, and the hollic goſt in the prymiti-  
ue church ordeyned.

By the whiche meanes it ſhalbe preuented, that  
theſe wicked Begginge houſes, and ſubtiltie off  
Hypocrites, ſhall not take from thee nedie men-  
bres of Chriſt, the Almoſe that is due to them:  
nor Ambition of mans praiſe, and thanckes, nor  
uayne glorie, ſhall deſile the right office of Al-  
moſe, whiche euell bowe muche it ought to be  
eſchued, Chriſt uery playnlie taught, when he  
commaunded, ſo to geue Almoſe, as the left  
hande may not knowe, what the right  
hande dothe. This may beſt be doone, if eue-  
rie man put into the Comen Cheſt, or Boxe of the  
Church, to the uſe of the poore, as muche as he  
may ſpare of that God geueth him. For when  
euery man him ſelf will distribute his owne Ala-

moſe, fiſt the Inſtitution of the hollie goſt, and  
the lawfull Communion, Compainie, and Fe  
lowſhip of Saintes is broken. Beſydeſt halmoe  
due to the litle ones of Chriſt, and ſo to Chriſt him  
ſelf, is gyuen oftener to the unworthie, then to  
the worthie (for euerye man can not knowe and  
trie ſuche poore people as he meeteth ſodenlie)  
and alſo ſuche as be not meete to haue Almoſe, come  
better inſtructed to beg, yea, as it were to wringe  
out the Almoſe of A mans Purſe with paynted  
wordes, then thoſe to whom it onlie ought to  
be geuen. Moreouer when A man geueth Al  
moſe with his owne hande, he dothe hardlie put  
out of his mynde the deſyre of mens thackes and  
uayne prayſes, which uaine rewarde when he  
receaueth of men: he may not ſee for the true  
and perſet rewarde of god. And fynallie, when  
it is moſt certein, that ſuche as gyue theim ſelves  
wilfullie to the trade of Begginge, be geuen and  
bent to all myſchieff: what other thinge do thei  
that nourifhe theim, then maynteyne and encrea  
ce the greateſt Peſtilences and deſtructions off  
A comen welthe? Wherefore all ſuche as  
haue wiſelie writen how comen welthes ſhoul  
de be well gouerned, haue thought that ſuche  
perſones were not to be ſuffred in A comen we  
ltbe. And certaynlie men ought to be aſha  
med and lament, when this right maner of proui  
ſion



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fion for the pore is restored in manye contrays,  
whiche yet be under Antichrist: suche as uaunte  
thei haue receaued the Gospell of Christe, and  
professe to be off his Kingdome, be slacke to resto  
re it, yea be hynderers off it, seinge it is an orde  
naunce of Christes Religion so necessarie, and  
so holson.

To conclude, who so euer dothe not carefullie  
endeuour, as muche as he may, to restore this hol  
lie ordenaunce off the Prouision for the poore, as  
the lorde hathe commaunded, and the hollie gost  
ordayned: He dothe playnlie beare witnes off  
himself, that he dothe not in deade knowe, nor  
perfetlie desyre Christe, and his Kingdome, how ma  
che so euer in wordes he boast of Christe, and his  
Kynge.

## THE MEANE TO RESTO re into the Church the righte kynde of geuinge, and distribution of Almo se, and Prouision for the poore.



T is most requysite, that all Ma  
gistrates, and Gouvernours, that  
desire the promotion of the King  
dom off Christe, and the welthe  
of those thei gouerne, do procure



that this godlie prouision for the Poore and needie bee restored, euen as the Hollie Goste hath set forth unto us in the Seconde, Fourth, Fyft, and Sixth off the Actes off the Apostells. For with out it, ther can bee no true felowship or Cōmuniō off Saintes. This may be don after this sorte, First that euerye Churche haue his Deacons, for the prouision, and ouersight of the Poore, (as before is said,) Men off good reporte, and full off the Hollie Goste, and wisdom, and so manie of them as the multitude off the People, and off the Poore shall requyre.

Their Office is conteyned in these poyntes. First thei ought to make diligent serche, how manie poore in deade bee in euery Congregation, that ought to be provided for by the Congregation. For it belongeth to all Congregations off Christe, not onlie not to mayntayne lewde persones in their wycted idlenesse: but also to hannysh them their companie, who, when thei may by their owne honest labour maymaine them self, will not labour, but lyue in ordinarie consuminge the sustenaunce, that is due to the needie and Poore off Christe. And agaynst suche persones this Rule is to be kept, He that laboreth not, let hym not eate: That commaundement also off the Hollie Goste touching Wydowes, ought to be expounded also off all needie

ready. If ther bee any faithfull man or woman,  
saith the Hollie Goste, that hathe wydowes, let  
him prouide, and minister unto them: and let  
not the Congregation be burdened, that thei,  
whiche are right wydowes may haue inough. So  
lyfewise those, that haue anye needie under  
them, whether thei be their Eynsfolkes, seruau-  
tes, or other wise ioyned to them by any speciall  
cause, ought to mynyster to suche persones ne-  
cessaries for their lyuinges, if thei be able to do it,  
and to spare the Congregation, as it may be the  
better able to mayntayne and keepe those, that  
haue no Eynsfolkes, masters, or friendes, that will,  
or can prouide for them.

All mens myndes ought to be moued with  
this fearefull iudgement off the Hollie Goste:  
If ther be any man, that dothe not  
prouide for his owne, and speciallie  
for them off his howsholde: The sa-  
me hath denied the faithe, and is wor-  
se then an Infidell. For unto those, that God  
hathe by any specyall meanes ioyned together,  
this the seconde principall commaundemaunt,  
wherin all the lawe is conteyned and fulfilled,  
dothe chieflie belonge: Thou shalt lo-  
ue thy neighbour as thy selffe. For tho-  
se, whom God coupleth and ioyneth to gither  
by the Bande off Eyndred, affinitie, howsolde,  
or

or any other particuler meanes: he maketh thei  
therbie, aboue all other, neighbours.

I The first poynt then off the Office of the Dea  
cons of the poore, is, that thei make diligēt serche,  
who lacke in deade, and be not able to relieue  
their owne lacke: Then who counterfaite A neade,  
or with Idlenesse and Riot, make themselves nea-  
die: And finalie, who haue suche neibours, that  
can, or do take the care to prouyde for them.

Suche as the Deacons shall fynde, that neither  
can gette their owne lyuinge, nor haue off their  
neighbours, that doo relieue them: their Names,  
with the maner off their neade and behauiour,  
thei ought to write in A particuler boke, And  
certayn tymes to uisite them, and to call them  
unto them, that thei may the more certanlie kno  
we, how well and uertuouslie they use thalmoſe  
of Good People, and what thinges from tyme to ty  
me, thei neade. For as nothing will suffice the wy  
cked and lewde, neather haue thei any measure  
or truthe in begginge: so the Good and shamefast  
do couer and dissemble their neade, and thinke  
euerie thinge to muche, that is geuen unto them  
by the Congregation. But the Hollie Goste ha-  
the appoynted and ordered the maner and ende  
off Distribution of Almes, that none shoulde lac-  
ke, and euerie one shoude haue as moche as is suf-  
ficient for his honest relieff. And who cannot  
see

See euen by this one thinge, How necessarie it is  
for Congregations to haue suche Deacons for the  
poore: that not rashlie, but most diligentlye searche  
out, and certaynlye knowe the state off euery one  
that askeeth the helpe off the Congregation: whe-  
ther, and what thinge he lacketh, and how moche  
is to be gyuen to euerye one for his necessarie re-  
lieff. Besydes, whether thei haue any Freendes,  
that be able and ought to relieue them. For  
suche ought by the Congregation to be forced to  
relieue their owne: and therunto, as in the executiō  
off the rest off the discipline, the Deacons ought  
to be assistente to the ministers off the worde, and  
Elders.

Thother poynt off thoffice off Deacons is,  
to keepe what so euer commeth to the Church,  
for the use off the poore, and therof to distribu-  
te to euerye one that needeth, as moche as shall suf-  
fice to lyue A godlye liff in the lorde: And to keepe  
A perfecte accoumpt off their doings, Whiche  
thei must yelde to the ministers off the woorde,  
and the Elders: Procuringe, after the exam-  
ple off the Apostell, Honest thinges not on-  
ly before God, but also in the sight off  
all men. Wherfore the Holie Ghost requyryth  
that suche Deacons shoulde be off Good reporte  
amonge the people off Christe. For as Men bee  
desyrous off Money; so upon the least occasion,  
thei



thei suspecte euell off suche as haue the distribu-  
 tion off commen money. Besydes, the poore that  
 haue not lerned, by the sprite off Christe, to be  
 contented, whether thei haue plentie, or do suffer  
 neede, be uery suspitious, and full off complayn-  
 tes. And therfor that suche Deacons shoulde  
 be of the greater authoritie emonge the people off  
 God, and the better credite geuen unto them: the  
 auncient Churches appoynted unto them, the  
 next degree after the Elders. And admitted them  
 to be Aiders in the hollie mynysterie of thadmini-  
 stration, bothe of the worde, and also of the sa-  
 cramentes. Antichrist made this office, as he dyd  
 all other Mynysteries, nothunge at all, but to serue  
 for a uaine pompe: as at this present day ther bee  
 uery fewe that thinke the Deacons office to be  
 any other thinge, then to serue the Bishops, and  
 Priestes at Masse, and to reade the gossell. whiche  
 thinges were appointed to this office onlie at the  
 first, that whilest thei prouided for the poore, and  
 dyd helpe to execute the discipline, thei shulde be  
 of the greater Authoritie, and haue the more cre-  
 dite emonge the people off God. For the  
 ouersight of the possessions belonging to Churc-  
 hes, and to gather the fruytes, reuenues, and ren-  
 tes of those thinges that were gyuen for the relief  
 of the poore: certayn were appointed, who we-  
 re called Subdeacons and Bailiffes, that the Dea-  
 cons



cons might first gyue them selves to the right distributiō of suche thinges, as were gathered for the relief of the poore, so as euery one might haue that was cōueniēt in dedde to lyue to the lorde: then to see that those that were relieued by the Cōgregatiō, dyd lyue to serue God: And finallie, to furder this Discipline cōmōge other Christians, whose life and behauour thei ought the better knowe and trie, by the reason of gatheringe relief for the poore. This fāde and maner of gatheringe and distributiō by the Deacons, and Subdeacōs, was obserued till and in the tyme of Gregorie the Būshop of Rome, as appereth in manye his Epistells. And albeit the Deacōs of the Church be neuer so honest, and wise: yet can thei not prouide for the Poore, onles thei haue wherewith to distribute to the poore, and therfor it belongeth to Magistrates to see, that Churches haue sufficiēt to relieue the poore. In tyme longe past, the Fourth parte of all Reuenues, that either belōged to the Spiritualtie, by their Possessions, or cam to hit by good mens gysts, and oblations, was taken for the relief of the poore. Besydes, manie uertuous Princes, and good Men made Hospitals, and howses for the Relieff of the poore: Some for suche as were Hole of bodye, and some for suche as were sicke: Sō to keepe Infantes, and some to cōforte Straungers, and Banished mē. But all these in cōtynuance of tyme, through the wretched

wycked Monkes, and Pryestes, were conuerted from those godlie uses, and turned to the mayntenance of their owne bellies, Pleasures, and pryde. Thei passed neither of the Fownders good myndes, nor the lawes of Magistrates: but blynded poore men, makinge them beleue, that more profiet shoulde comme bothe to quyet and dedde, if those godlie Almoſe were bestowed on Masses, and suche like ungodlie Triffhe trasshe: then if Christe therewith shulde be fedde, in the Hungrie: refreshed in the Thyrstie: comforted with lodginge in Straungers, and the Harbourlesse: clothed in the Naked: and uisited in the Sicke, and Enprisoned. Wherefore, it is the parte off good Magistrates, to prouyde, that suche thinges be brought to their right uses. And besydes, it is conueniēt, that some Taxes be set on riche spirituall Promotions, for the relieff off the Pore: in steede off the Fourthe parte off their Reuenues, whiche by so manye Canons was lymeted to the use of the Poore.

Morouer lest those, that be not worthie to haue the Almoſe of the Churche, and of good men, shoulde take it from those that be worthie, and in dead neadie: Good Magistrates ought to renue, and put in execution, that lawe off God, and off the Emperour Valentynyan, whiche forbiddeth, that any man be suffered to begge: and commaundeth

Jeth, that those that be able to labour, shoulde be  
 forced to labour: and that suche as be not able to  
 labour, sholde be kept as our Brethern, and men-  
 bres, euerye one in the Congregation where he  
 dwelleth. And that this may bee the better doon,  
 commaundement ought to be gyuen, that euerye  
 man maintaine suche as be of his one howsolde, or  
 other wise properlie ioyned to him, if he be able:  
 And that euery Citie, Towne, and uillage, doo  
 mayntain suche poore people, as their friendes  
 be not able to keepe, and not suffer them to wan-  
 der abroad. And because it may be, that some  
 Towne, or uillage is so poore, that it is not able to  
 relieue al the Poore therof: that suche also be not  
 left unprouided, it is uery requysite, that in eue-  
 rie Shire, certayne godlie, and spirituallie wise  
 men, be appoynted: who may sende suche poore  
 people from the places where thei cannot be re-  
 lieued, to such Congregations, where thei may  
 be sufficienlic relieued. For all we Christians  
 be together membres, by the which name, the Con-  
 gregations off the Gentiles in the tyme off Saine  
 Paule, and at his exhortation, dyd confesse, that  
 it was their duetie, to relieue the Congregations  
 in Iurie, that suffered great hunger and famine.  
 Furdermore, because through our corrupte, and  
 al ways disobedient nature to God, we continu-  
 allie lothe the ordinaunces, and commaundementes

off God, and after our owne luste, and fond  
iudgement, we desire to folowe other meanes, and  
waies, then God hathe appoynted; ther wilbe  
som, that, not withstanding this most holy prouy  
sion for the poore, will not put their Almosc in to  
the comen cheste, or boxe off the lorde; but wil  
rather geue their Almosc with ther owne hādes,  
if they be mynded to geue any at all. Such mens  
pride must be mette with, not onely by a lawe off  
the Magistrat, but also by the discipline off the  
Churche. By a lawe, to make theim geue double  
to the lordes Cheste, if they be founde to geue any  
thyng pryuatlie to the neadie: And by the disci  
pline of the Churche, that if any geue nothing in  
to the lordes cheste, he be warned off his durtie  
by the mynysters off the Churche, accordyng to  
the worde off God. Whose admonytion if they  
stubbourly comēne, that they be taken for Eth  
nykes, and Publicans. For albeit, it be lest to  
euerie mans will, to offer to Christ his lorde, to  
shuse off his litle ones, as moche off his goodes as  
he will: yet no man maye be suffred, contrarie to  
the expresse commaundement of God, to come al  
ways with an Emtie hande into the presence  
off the lorde, and utterlie to despise the ordenaun  
ce off the holy Gost, for the prouision for the  
poore, yea, as moche as in hym lieth, to subuert it,  
by his pryuat distribution off Almosc.



And here wil mans wisdom (which alwaies uau-  
 teth it self aboute Goddes) obiecte, that it is unna-  
 tural, that mens handes shulde be shut to the faith-  
 ful, that they may not geue, at their pleasure, to  
 such, as thei perceaue in deade to lacke. For a man  
 shall fynde among the pouertie, very good men,  
 who be ashamed to aske the Almoſe off the Church,  
 he, haue they neuer so great neede. Herunto this  
 is to be answered, first, that no mans hande is so  
 shutte by this lawe, but that he maye open it to  
 whatsoeuer pore he wil, and is able: but by this  
 lawe, accordyng to Goddes commaundement, and  
 the ordnaunce off the holy gost, this is preuent-  
 ed, that the children off God maye not geue to  
 the Enemies of Christ, these that either lacke not,  
 or els be wilfullie in neede, those thinges, that thei  
 owe to the litle ones off Christ, which lacke in  
 deade. For it is not possible, as I saied before,  
 that any pryuat man, shulde so certeynlie serche  
 out the disposition off the poore, as those, that be  
 appoynted to that office by the Church, and  
 shal be exercised with all diligence therein.

And God doth not keepe his gistes, and encrea-  
 ce off his holy sprite, from such, as he hath cho-  
 sen, and called, to so great mynsteries of his church.  
 Besides, admit, that euery man knowe cer-  
 teynlie his needie neighbours: yet is it far better,  
 that euery man sende such poore people, that as



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• **U**pon his relief, be they neuer so holy and uertuous,  
to the Deacons off the Church, to receaue off  
theim: For otherwise, others shal take example  
by him, to distribute also their owne Almoſe, and  
so ostentymes to such as they knowe not, and be  
not worthy off Christes Almoſe, who can be  
more boldelic and craftelic, then the Poore in dea  
de. We ought to take wonderful heade, lest the  
least hole in the worlde be opened to our na  
tural pride, to be wise agaynst God, and to swar  
ue a heare breadeth from his commandementes  
and ordenaunces, either to the right hande or to  
the lſte.

Iff any be aſhamed to go gladlye  
to the hole companye and mynſterie off the  
Deacons, let him declare his pouertie to one of  
the Deacons: or if he be lothe to do this, then let  
such as knowe his neade, and godlynes, shewe it to  
the Deacons, and get necessarie relief for him.

Not with ſtandynge, no Christen man, be he fal  
len from neuer so great richesſe to pouertie,  
from neuer so high degree to the lowest, ought to  
be aſhamed of the Croſſe off Christ, and the hol  
som remedie, that God hath prouyded: moche  
lesſe ought Christen men be lothe, to receaue  
relief off their neade, at the Lordes hande, by  
the mynſterie off his Church, by whose most  
iust, and no lesſe holſom iudgement for theim, they  
be come to such pouertie, and baſe degree of life.

Howbeit, it pertaineth to the Deacons office, not

un. 11. 11. have respect to euerie mans povertie,  
but also off the weavers off their myndes, and  
with such wisdom, and liberalitie, to helpe eu-  
erie mans necessite, that they laie on no man trou-  
bled with povertie, the trouble also off sharme: nor  
that they bryng any, that haue in tyme past been  
wel and liberalie maynecyned, to such scarcitie  
and skantnes off meate and clothyng, as they bee  
not able to suffer, albeit such relief were suffici-  
ent, to an other that hathe ben so used.

The commaundement off the Holy Ghost ought  
in this poynt to be considered, that ther be so-  
moche geuen to euerie one, as is necessarie to lea-  
de a good, and godlie life. And it is manyfest,  
that as all men be not off like strength off bodie,  
nor haue not ben brought up after one kynde off  
liuing: so some ought to haue more, some lesse: some  
fynner, some courser, meate, apparel, and other ne-  
cessaries. Which thyng Seynt Gregorie conside-  
ryng, when the noble men, and women were spoi-  
led by the Lombardes, he gaue unto them uery li-  
beral Pensions for their relief, of the goodes of the  
church. And therefore Christian Magistrates ought  
to make this lawe, First, that no man be suffered to  
beg: but that euerie man do maynecyne, and kepe  
his owne householde, kynred, and allies, if he be  
able to do it: the iudgement wherof, ought to per-  
teigne to the ordynarie Magistrat. And that

Such as be destitute off such helpe, be ~~in~~ by the Citie, towne, vil-<sup>lage</sup>, or Congregation where they dwell. If any citie, towne, vil-<sup>lage</sup>, or cōgregation, be not able to, maintaine the pouertie thereof, that then, by the discretion of the chief Gouernour of the cōtreie, such poore people be sent to sō richer Cōgregatiō, where thei may be relieued.

Another poynt of this lawe ought to be, for the election, and appoyntyng off Deacons, as is afore seid, and that they be, by their othe, enioyned, diligenlie to serche out, what thinges euery man needeth, and that they faithfully, to their power, geue it to them: and to make an accompte of their receiptes, and paymentes, to the mynysters of the worde, and Elders.

The third poynt, that it be forbodden to geue Almoſe priuatlie, and that all men be exhorted, that they will rather, according to Goddes commaundement, and the ordenaunce of the holy ghost, cōmyt their Almoſe to the Churches, and to the mynysters appoynted for that purpose: then after their owne natural pride, distribute it themselves, contrarie to goddes worde, and the institution of the Hollie Goste.

The fourth point, that thei cause to be restored, for the relief of the poore, such giftes as wer offred, by our Elders to Christe, if any yet remaine.

And the fewere off those giftes shal be founde remaining

maynyng: the greater pensions to be set on riche benefices, for the relief of the poore, in recompense off the fourth parte off the Reuenues off all Churches, that is due by so many Canons.

The fyfte point, that great paynes be set on them, that shall blasphemie this most holy Institution off the Holie Goste, or that shall go about to pul any man from it. And if any man shall thynke any thing to be corrected in the Deacons, and the prouision for the poore, that he first warne the **Deacons** therof: and if they will not folowe his reasonable warnyng, that he declare the matter to the mynyster of the word, and the Elders: that in all thinges, the Authorite of Goddes worde maye be of force, and the wicked pride of men, who can allowe nothing, that is ordeined of God, maye be resisted in euerie place, and in tyme: and so it maye be the easlier obteyned off the people off **Christ**, whereby the litle ones off **Christ** maye so liberallie be provided for, as we maye at length ioiFULLIE heare: Come ye blissed of my father, and receaue the Kingdom, that is prepared for you, from the begynning of the worlde. I was hungry, and ye gaue me to eat &c.

And it is not ynough for the liberalitie of Christians, to geue onely meate, harbour, and clothinge to suche as be in extreme necessity: but also they ought liberallie to geue of the giftes, God hath



geuentheim, wherwith godly maydens mariable,  
who for lack of dowrie remayne long unmarried,  
maye be in tyme maried, and coupled with honest  
men, and also that wittie Children, that lack fren  
des, may be brought up to studie, to serue in Chri  
stes Church. Besydes, good Christians, that  
lack wherwith to exercise their craftes, may be  
therwith holpen, partlie by gyste, partlie by loa  
ne, as ther may come profet of their Arts, and thei  
maye be the better able to nouryshe, and bring  
up their children for the lorde, and to make them  
profitable membres of the comen welthe. For  
it is not ynough for the Congregations off Christ  
to prouyde, that men may onlic lyue, but that thei  
may lyue to the Lorde, for a certeyn and mutual  
profet betwene them selfs, and of the Church, and  
commen welthe. And therfore all Congre  
gations ought to prouyde, that all those that be  
baptized in Christe, be uertuouslie brought up  
from their childehod, and taught good Artes,  
that euerie one, accordyng to his portion, may  
bryng forth somewhat, to profet the comen wel  
the, and to declare hymself to others a true, and  
profitable membre off Christ.

### An addition.

Ther be, that denye not the office off the Dea  
conrie in the Church of Christ, to be ordyned  
by



by God: but saye, suche office is not of necessity.  
For ther be som Congregations, where al men be  
welthie, and ther is no Pouertie, and so no neede  
of the Deaconrie. That it pleaseth them so gene-  
rally to graunt, thoffice of the Deaconrie to be  
the ordinaunce of God, they deserue no thanks.  
For if they shulde denye it, they muste other con-  
fesse, Seynt Paule erreth, or seynt Paule wolde sa-  
ye, they erre. For, besydes he teacheth what  
men ought to be called to be Deacōs in the Chur-  
che of Christ, he saieth playnelye, that God ordey-  
ned and constituted in his Church: first Apo-  
stels, secōdarilie Prophetes, thirddie Teachers,  
then those that do myracles: after that, those  
that haue the gistes of healing, helpers, gouer-  
nours, and diuersitie of tongues. Vnder wiche na-  
me of Helpers, as a general word for al men that  
may do good in the Church of Christ, thoffice  
of the Deacons (according as the interpreters  
on that place agreablye do testifie) as it is in the  
Actes mencioned, is conteyned. Now where they  
saie, ther may be a Church without poore, and  
so no neede of Deacons: so may it be said, ther  
may be a Congregation, wherin all may bee ler-  
ned in Goddes worde, and therefore no neede of  
preachers and teachers. But what a fonde fym-  
de of argument is it, to reason of thinges, that  
maye be, as though they were: to lledge thinges

that be onelie in Vtopia, as if they wer common  
in euerie Countrey: to magnifie their owne uncerte-  
teyn Sophistrie, and to neglect the certeyn doctri-  
ne of God: who forseyng all thinges, as wel to co-  
me as present, saied, ye shall haue alweys poore e-  
mong you, and therfore ordeyned this mynysterie  
in his Church of necessitie, not for a tyme, but for  
euer to conynue: to haue the ouersight, and ca-  
re off the poore, because ther shalbe poore for  
euer. And albeit God, in som particular congre-  
gation, dothe so bestowe his benefites, as many be  
ritche, and fewe poore: yet wil he not, that they  
shal haue their respec-te, onelie to the poore in the  
same Congregation, but also to such as be in other  
Congregations, as appeareth by those of Mace-  
donia, Achaia, and Corinthus. Who, accordyng  
to the doctrine off seyn Paule, and their duetic,  
sent their charitie to Hierusalem, for the relief of  
the saynes, and poore Brethern there. Some ayen  
saic, why may not euery man appoint his owne Al-  
mener, or Chamberer, to distribute his Almoose, so  
the poore be provided for, it forceth not, how, or  
by whom it be don?

Albeit this obiection be before sufficienlie con-  
founded, by Master. D. Bucer: yet it may be ad-  
ded, that such obiections procede off affection  
and pryuat gaigne ( which maye doo moche  
with world lie men) and not of a zeale to aduau-  
ce Goddes glorie.

For

For Christian men, that seeke to serue god their  
lorde and Master, and not their owne commodi-  
tie, and affections, when they knowe his will, plea-  
sure, and ordenaunce, serche no further: but as  
good subiectes, and seruauntes, by all meanes la-  
bour to do, and fulfil the same.

They dispute not, why God hath ordeyned,  
or commaunded this, or that: nor thinke this  
myght be other wise don, then God hath deuy-  
sed: or that he hath don, is not off necessitie.

They knowe his wil, and pleasure, declared by  
his worde, is an unchaungeable lawe, wherunto  
nothyng maye be added, or dymynyshed, but  
ought to be obeied off all his seruauntes: that he  
hath made nothyng in uayne, but as he is the uery  
wisdom it self, and forseeeth what is best for his:  
so hath he most wiselie, and most necessarilie or-  
deyned this mynysterie off the Deaconrie in his  
Churche. Yea, they be most certeyn, that as ther  
be in mans bodie diuers members, not all of one son-  
te, but som more profitable, then some, and yet al  
requysite, and necessarie to make a parfet bodie:  
so in the Churche of Christ, ther be dyuers mem-  
bres, mynisteries, and uocations, preachours, tea-  
chours, elders, deacons &c. Who, albeit they  
be not off like Authorite, and degree: yet be they  
all requysite, and necessarie to the edifyng off a  
godlie, and parfet Churche off Christe.

Neither

Neither will any of Christes seruantes, thrust  
himself, not being lawfully called, into any myn-  
sterie, or seate to come into it by the wyndowe,  
as Thieves and murderers do, but wil tary til he  
may enter by the doore, til he be ordinarilie cal-  
led by the Church of Christ, as Stephen, and  
the rest of the Diacons in the prymytiue Church  
were. For all good men wil feare, lest when  
they either do any thing contrarie to Goddes or  
denaunce, or meddle with that, wherunto they  
be not ordinarilie called, the plague of God will  
fall on them, as it dyd vppon the life, by iuste iudge-  
ment, in tyme past. Nadab, and Abin the chil-  
dren of Aaron, toke thier Censers, put a straunge  
fier therein, and offered to God: but because they  
dyd it contrary to the ordinaunce of god, the fier  
cam from the lorde and destroyed them. Vsa,  
because he set his hande to staie up tharke of the  
lorde, that it should not fall, albeit the deede sym-  
plie considered was good, yet because he medled  
with that office, wherunto he was not ordinar-  
ilie called, and appoynted, God plagued him with  
death. Kynge Ozias, because he wolde be busie  
in other mens uocation, offering incense to the  
Lorde: which pertained to the ministerie of the  
Children of Aaron, and not to his, was stroken  
with the Leprie. The wiseman saith in the  
prouerbes, Ther is a waie that seemeth to a  
man



man iust and right, but thende bryngeth to death. When men leaue the waies of God, and occupie their busie braynes about thinges besides, or cōtrarie to Goddes worde, they fal at length cleue from God, and become Godlesse. Therfore Men ought to take heade, and to leaue their uncerteyn phantasies, and cleaue unto the certeyn worde of God, wherūto whosoener leanneth, can not stumble, whosoener foloweth it, cannot erre: and he that walketh therein, shal at length come to the eternal Kingdō, which is prepared for all such as loue and folowe God.

Remember the poore, and God wil remēber you:  
 Forget the poore, and God will not forget you.